

LISTING OF CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) An antimicrobial, tubular, single- or multilayer polymer-based plastics foodstuff casing having an inner and outer surface, wherein the casing comprises polyamide or polyamide layers and wherein the casing is premoistened so as to be ready-to-fill, which comprises, as antimicrobial constituent, an alkyl para-hydroxybenzoate and/or a salt thereof, wherein the antimicrobial constituent is applied as an aqueous solution in which the proportion of all of the antimicrobial constituents together is from 0.2 to 8% by weight, based on the weight of the solution to the inner or to the inner and outer surface of the casing, wherein the polyamide casings or polyamide layers ~~absorb~~ comprise up to about 6% by weight of water, and wherein the antimicrobial constituent is combined with propanediol and a viscosity increasing component or an oil emulsion.
2. (Previously Presented) The foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein the alkyl para-hydroxybenzoate or its salt contains from 1 to 10 carbon atoms in an alkyl moiety.
3. (Previously Presented) The foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein the alkyl para-hydroxybenzoate and/or its salt has been combined with at least one other antimicrobial agent.
4. (Previously Presented) The foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 3, wherein the other antimicrobial agent is an agent which reduces water activity.
5. (Previously Presented) The foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 4, wherein the agent which reduces water activity is glycerol.
6. (Previously Presented) The foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inner side thereof is impregnated with at least one component which improves peelability.
7. (Original) The foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 6, wherein the component which improves peelability is a cellulose derivative or starch derivative, an alginate, or chitosan.

8. (Currently Amended) A process for the production of the foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 1, which comprises premoistening the casing with an aqueous solution in which the proportion of all of the antimicrobial agents together is from $[[0.1]]$ 0.2 to 8% by weight, based on the weight of the solution.
9. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 8, wherein the alkyl para-hydroxybenzoate and/or its salt is applied in one step with water serving for premoistening the inner and/or the outer side of the casing.
10. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 9, wherein the aqueous solution is applied by spraying.
11. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 10, wherein the aqueous solution is applied with the aid of a spray mandrel to the inner side of the casing, while said casing is shirred.
12. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 11, wherein the aqueous solution comprises at least one component which makes the casing easy to peel.
13. (Previously Presented) A synthetic sausage-casing comprising a casing of claim 1.
14. (Previously Presented) A casing of claim 2 having 1 to 6 carbon atoms in the alkyl moiety.
15. (Previously Presented) A casing of claim 2 having 2 to 5 carbon atoms in the alkyl moiety.
16. (Previously Presented) The foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 2, wherein the alkyl para-hydroxybenzoate and/or its salt has been combined with at least one other antimicrobial agent.
17. (Previously Presented) A process of claim 8, wherein said antimicrobial agents are present in a proportion from 0.2 to 2% by weight based on the weight of the solution.
18. (Previously Presented) A process for the production of the foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 2, which comprises premoistening the casing with an aqueous solution in which the proportion of all of the antimicrobial agents together is from 0.1 to 8% by weight, based on the weight of the solution.

19. (Previously Presented) A process for the production of the foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 3, which comprises premoistening the casing with an aqueous solution in which the proportion of all of the antimicrobial agents together is from 0.1 to 8% by weight, based on the weight of the solution.
20. (Previously Presented) A synthetic sausage-casing comprising a casing of claim 2.
21. (Previously Presented) The foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein the viscosity increasing component is either a polyhydric alcohol or a polyacrylic acid.
22. (Previously Presented) The foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein the oil emulsion is either a natural oil or a synthetic triglyceride.